

Message Text

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PAGE 01 GENEVA 06696 291422Z

64

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SUBJ CCD- CONVENTIONAL ARMS

ON INSTRUCTIONS FROM THE HAGUE, DUTCH DELOFF (MEERBURG)
PROVIDED US DEL WITH FOLLOWING WRITTEN RESPONSE TO
US APRIL 10 CONVENTIONAL ARMS PRESENTATION IN CCD:
BEGIN TEXT: AS THE NETHERLANDS GOVERNMENT HAS MADE CLEAR EARLIER, IT
TAKES,,
IN PRINCIPLE, A POSITIVE VIEW TOWARDS INITIATIVES WITH RESPECT
TO THE CONTROL OF CONVENTIONAL ARMS ON A REGIONAL BASIS. HOWEVER,
THE RESULTS OF EARLIER INITIATIVES UP TO NOW HAVE NOT BEEN
VERY ENCOURAGING. NEVERTHELESS, THE NETHERLANDS GOVERNMENT COULD
CONSIDER TO BACK TO THE AMERICAN SUGGESTIONS AGAIN.

THE THESIS THAT IN FACT IN THOSE REGIONS WHERE TENSIONS EXIST,
AND WHERE ARRANGEMENTS ON CONVENTIONAL ARMS CONTROL ARE THUS MOST
NECESSARY, THE ESTABLISHMENT OF SUCH ARRANGEMENTS OFTEN IS NOT
LIKELY, DOES NOT SEEM JUSTIFIED. SITUATIONS ARE CHANGEABLE. IN A
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PAGE 02 GENEVA 06696 291422Z

SITUATION AS IN CENTRAL-EUROPE, FOR EXAMPLE, WHERE FOR A LONG

TIME MEASURES ON CONVENTIONAL ARMS CONTROL WERE UNTHINKABLE, CONSULTATIONS ON THIS SUBJECT HAVE FINALLY STARTED.

OF COURSE, FOR AN EFFECTIVE STRATEGY IN THIS FIELD, A NUMBER OF MINIMUM CONDITIONS MUST BE MET. THE US-FOVUMENT STATES: THE INITIATIVE MUST COME FROM THE REGION ITSELF AND OUTSIDERS HAVE TO HONOR THE REGIONAL ARRANGEMENTS.

COMPLEMENTARY ARRANGEMENTS COULD INDEED CONTRIBUTE TO THE CREATION OF FAVORABLE CONDITIONS FOR THE ESTABLISHMENT OF REGIONAL ARMS CONTROL AGREEMENTS. THE IDEA TO EMBODY SUCH ARRANGEMENTS IN A "CODE OF CONDUCT" WHICH SHOULD REFER TO THE ACQUISITION AND TRANSFER OF CONVENTIONAL ARMS, IS IN ACCORDANCE WITH EARLIER VIEWS OF THE NETHERLANDS' GOVERNMENT. A WORLD-WIDE APPROACH IS, OF COURSE, DESIRABLE.

AS TO THE FOUR US PRINCIPLES CONCERNED, THE FOLLOWING MAY BE SAID:

1. ON THE ONE HAND, THE US WANTS TO LEAVE IT TO THE STATES TO DETERMINE WHICH SAFETY MEASURES ARE ESSENTIAL. ON THE OTHER HAND THE STATES INVOLVED ARE EXPECTED TO TAKE INTO ACCOUNT REGIONAL AND INTER-REGIONAL SECURITY WHEN ACQUIRING ARMS. IT WILL NOT BE EASY TO FORMULATE CRITERIA WHICH COMBINE BOTH ASPECTS IN ONE USEFUL SYSTEM. PERHAPS "SELF-RESTRAINT" BY STATES IS THE ONLY POSSIBLE WAY OUT, BUT IT ILLUSTRATES THE WEAK BASIS OF THE FIRST CRITERION. IN GENERAL, STATES WILL BASE THEIR ACTS IN THE FIRST PLACE ON WHAT THEY THINK IS NECESSARY TO SAFEGUARD THEIR OWN SECURITY. HOW THESE ACTS WILL AT THE SAME TIME AFFECT THE SECURITY OF OTHER STATES WILL, AT ITS BEST, BE OF SECONDARY CONSIDERATION, UNLESS POSSIBLE REACTIONS COULD AGAIN NEGATIVELY INFLUENCE THEIR OWN SAFETY. ALSO THE THESIS THAT "SELF RESTRAINT BY ONE WOULD CREATE INCENTIVES FOR SELF-RESTRAINT BY OTHERS" IS BASED ON DOUBTFUL FACTS, AT LEAST FROM A HISTORICAL POINT OF VIEW.

2. ACKNOWLEDGEMENT OF THE LEGITIMACY OF THE CONCERN WHICH THE ACQUISITION OF ARMS CAN EVOKE WITH RESPECT TO STATES WHOSE SECURITY IS AT STAKE, SEEMS AN ATTEMPT TO SUBJECT THE ACQUISITION OF ARMS TO OBJECTIVE STANDARDS. OF COURSE, THIS IS TO BE WELCOMED. THE LIMITED OFFICIAL USE

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PAGE 03 GENEVA 06696 291422Z

QUESTION IS, HOWEVER, WHICH AUTHORITY IS ABLE TO JUDGE IN CONCRETE CASES. CONSULTATIONS BETWEEN INTERESTED STATES CAN IMPROVE MUTUAL UNDERSTANDING, BUT IN VIEW OF THE CHARACTER OF THE MATTER CONCERNED, IT IS TO BE DOUBTED IF SUCH CONSULTATIONS WILL OFTEN LEAD TO CONCRETE SOLUTIONS.

3. THE NETHERLANDS' GOVERNMENT DOES NOT ACCEPT AN AUTOMATIC LINK BETWEEN THE LEVEL OF DEFENSE-AND THAT OF DEVELOPMENT BUDGETS.

NEVERTHELESS, IT CANNOT BE DENIED THAT A CERTAIN RELATIONSHIP EXISTS BETWEEN MILITARY SECURITY AND WHAT COULD BE INDICATED AS SECURITY IN THE SOCIAL-ECONOMIC OR OTHER FIELDS. IN THESE COMMENTS WE CANNOT GO DEEPER INTO THIS VERY VAGUE MATTER.

4. THE STRIVE FOR CONTROL E.G. REDUCTION NOT ONLY WITH RESPECT TO THE TRANSFER OF ARMS BUT ALSO TO THE MEANS OF PRODUCTION, SEEMS, ALTHOUGH VERY DESIRABLE, RATHER ALIEN TO PRESENT REALITIES. PERHAPS ONE COULD EXPECT SOME SUPPORT FOR THIS IDEA FROM THE SIDE OF THE PRODUCERS, BUT THE CHANCE THAT THE "HAVE NOTS" WOULD BE WILLING TO GIVE UP BOTH ARMS AS ARMS PRODUCTION-TECHNOLOGY, CAN, AS HAS BEEN LEARNED FROM THE PAST, BE DISREGARDED (AFFECTING SOVEREIGNTY, DISCRIMINATION, ETC.).

CONCLUSIONS

THE CHANCES FOR A REAL SUCCESSFUL ESTABLISHMENT OF REGIONS HAVING CONVENTIONAL ARMS CONTROL WILL, IN MANY CASES, DEPEND IN THE FIRST PLACE ON THE SITUATION IN THE REGION, BUT MOREOVER OFTEN ON A MORE FUNDAMENTAL AGREEMENT BETWEEN OUTSIDE POWERS, IN PARTICULAR BETWEEN THE SOVIET-UNION AND THE UNITED STATES. THE VIENNA NEGOTIATIONS ARE A CLASSICAL EXAMPLE.

IN GENERAL THE TIMING OF THE AMERICAN INITIATIVE DOES NOT SEEM VERY WELL CHOSEN. DURING THE NPT-REVIEW CONFERENCE THE UNITED STATES WAS ONE

OF THE TWO STATES WHICH WERE EXPOSED TO CRITICISM BECAUSE OF THE NON-FULFILMENT OF THEIR OBLIGATIONS UNDER ARTICLE VI OF THE NPT. THE UNITED STATES INSISTED INDEED THAT THIS ARTICLE ALSO DEALS WITH CONVENTIONAL ARMS CONTROL AND THEREFORE ALSO LAYS DOWN OBLIGATIONS TO NON-NUCLEAR WEAPON STATES. THIS POINT OF VIEW WAS REJECTED, HOWEVER, BY THE WHOLE NON-ALIGNED WORLD AND BY MANY MEMBERS OF NATO, AS THEY CONSIDERED NUCLEAR ARMS CONTROL AND DISARMAMENT AS LIMITED OFFICIAL USE

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PAGE 04 GENEVA 06696 291422Z

THE MOST PRESSING QUESTION. THE US INITIATIVE COULD BE MISUNDERSTOOD BY SOME NON-ALIGNED COUNTRIES AS A WAY OF DIVERTING ATTENTION.

MOREOVER, IT IS TO BE EXPECTED THAT THE AMERICAN INITIATIVE COULD BE UNDERSTOOD BY THE NON-ALIGNED STATES AS A (NEW) ATTEMPT BY THE GREAT POWERS TO MONOPOLIZE BESIDES NUCLEAR WEAPONS ALSO CONVENTIONAL ARMAMENTS. IT IS UNTHINKABLE THAT STATES WILL CONTRIBUTE TO THE INSTITUTION OF A SYSTEM OF LICENCES ON ARMS PRODUCTION-TECHNOLOGY, BY WHICH THEY, NEXT TO THEIR REJECTION OF NUCLEAR WEAPONS, ALSO WOULD LOSE AUTONOMY IN THE CONVENTIONAL FIELD.

OF COURSE, IT IS OF THE UTMOST NECESSITY TO ACHIEVE EFFECTIVE NON-DISCRIMINATORY MEASURES TO STOP THE COMPETITION AND THE TRADE IN CONVENTIONAL ARMS, BUT THE COURSE INDICATED IN THE AMERICAN

INITIATIVE DOES NOT SEEM TO HAVE, AT THIS MOMENT, MUCH CHANCE OF
SUCCESS. END TEXT.ABRAMS

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